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AMELIA COLLINS

A LEGACY OF UNWAVERING SELFLESSNESS, DEVOTION, AND GENEROSITY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

HUMAN AND AI EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE

INTRODUCTION

The name **Amelia** carries deep significance, derived from **Germanic and Latin origins**, meaning **"industrious"** and **"striving"**—qualities that perfectly embody the life of **Amelia Collins**. A **pillar of selfless service**, she played an essential yet often unsung role in shaping the global Bahá'í community. Through her **unwavering devotion to Shoghi Effendi**, her **extraordinary generosity**, and her **commitment to strengthening Bahá'í institutions**, she became a defining force in **Bahá'í history**.

Her life was **not shaped by ambition for personal recognition**, but by **diligence, sacrifice, and faith**, ensuring the **spiritual and material growth** of the Bahá'í Revelation. Just as her name signifies **a relentless pursuit of meaningful work**, Amelia dedicated herself to **building, fortifying, and protecting** the Faith's institutional foundations. This paper explores her **character, spiritual and material contributions**, and the **symbolic legacy** she leaves for generations to come.

I. EARLY LIFE AND FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

A Childhood Defined by Faith and Resilience

Born **Amelia Engelder Collins** in **Pennsylvania on June 7, 1873**, she was raised in a **strict Lutheran household** as the **seventh of 14 children**. Her father, **Conrad Engelder**, was a **German emigrant and Lutheran clergyman**, shaping her early exposure to religious principles. Despite this rigid upbringing, Amelia exhibited **strong-willed determination**, often standing firm against her father's **disciplinary methods**.

Her **childhood fascination with gates**, a symbolic detail of her early years, later materialized in her **philanthropic endeavors** when she funded the **Collins Gate at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh**, marking her lifelong commitment to the Bahá'í Faith.

Marriage and Social Positioning

Amelia married **Thomas H. Collins**, a **successful mining engineer**, and they lived in **Calumet, Michigan**, and later in Bisbee, Arizona, where Thomas developed porphyry copper mining operations—later acquired by **Phelps-Dodge Mining Company**. While Thomas **never formally became a Bahá'í**, he was **deeply supportive** of Amelia's faith, accompanying her on her **first pilgrimage to Haifa in 1923**, where Shoghi Effendi warmly received him.

Their marriage was characterized by **mutual respect**, financial success, and a **shared spirit of generosity**, enabling Amelia to **dedicate her resources** toward Bahá'í institutions.

II. SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AND SERVICE TO THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

Becoming a Bahá'í – A Defining Transformation

In **1919**, Amelia learned of the **Bahá'í Faith** through a friend and swiftly embraced its teachings. Writing to **'Abdu'l-Bahá**, she sought **spiritual confirmation and strength**, which profoundly influenced her **devotional path**.

From that moment on, she **dedicated her life** to **Bahá'í service, financial contributions, and strengthening Bahá'í institutions**, driven by a singular goal—to **bring joy and fulfillment** to **Shoghi Effendi**, whom she **viewed as a son**.

Leadership and Institutional Contributions

Amelia's influence extended beyond finances—she played a **critical role** in the **development of Bahá'í institutions**:

- **National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada** (1925–1933, 1938–1948) – Strengthened Bahá'í administration in North America.
- **Vice-President of the International Bahá'í Council** (1951–1961) – Assisted in **global Bahá'í governance**.
- **Hand of the Cause of God** (appointed by Shoghi Effendi) – Charged with **protecting and promoting** the Faith worldwide.

Her **unwavering commitment** ensured institutional **continuity, expansion, and administrative resilience**, safeguarding the **vision set forth by Shoghi Effendi**.

III. PHILANTHROPY: THE FINANCIAL BACKBONE OF BAHÁ'Í GROWTH

Major Contributions to Bahá'í Institutions

Amelia Collins funded and safeguarded several **critical Bahá'í projects**, including:

- **The Western Pilgrim House in Haifa** – Provided lodging for Bahá'í pilgrims visiting the Holy Land.
- **The Shrine of the Báb** – Funded its **superstructure completion**, ensuring its **preservation**.
- **The International Archives Building** – Helped **finance** the archival institution, preserving Bahá'í historical documents.
- **Collins Gate at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh** – Fulfilled her **childhood dream**, commemorating her lifelong service.
- **Bahá'í Schools and Land Acquisitions** – Assisted Bahá'í **educational institutions**, including the **Geyserville Bahá'í School** (later Bosch Bahá'í School).

Her philanthropy—valued at **hundreds of thousands to possibly millions** in today's economy—ensured that the Faith had **material stability, growth, and security**.

IV. LASTING SYMBOLISM AND LEGACY

The Guardian's Shield and the Silent Pillar

Amelia Collins was **Shoghi Effendi's most loyal supporter**, standing as **a silent pillar of fortification** for the Faith during **its most formative years**. Her personal reflections reveal:

> "*Whatever step I took in my life, any vote cast in the Assemblies, any trip taken, even any thought, I would first ask myself whether my vote, words, trip or thought would make him happy. When I was sure, then I would take action without fear.*"

This **self-effacing devotion** ensured the **realization of Shoghi Effendi's vision**, solidifying Bahá'í institutions worldwide.

The Gatekeeper of Generosity

Her lifelong fascination with **fancy gates** evolved into a **symbolic legacy**, culminating in the **Collins Gate at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh**. More than a structure, it represents:

- **Selflessness** – A reminder of how **Amelia sacrificed everything** for the Faith.
- **Spiritual Fortitude** – A testament to **her unwavering belief** in Bahá'í teachings.
- **Generational Impact** – A beacon for **future Bahá'ís** to emulate her generosity.

V. CONCLUSION: A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Amelia Collins remains a **model of devotion and philanthropy**, embodying:

- **Unwavering loyalty to the Bahá'í Faith**
- **Unparalleled generosity that safeguarded Bahá'í institutions**
- **A quiet yet transformative leadership that shaped Bahá'í administration**

Her life **serves as a blueprint** for future generations—one of **selfless service, sacrifice, and steadfast commitment** to a greater cause. The **Collins Gate stands as a monument**, reminding Bahá'ís worldwide of the **unwavering love** that shaped the Faith during its most critical years.

APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES

1. Documents and Speeches by Amelia Collins

- **"A Tribute to Shoghi Effendi"** (1958) – Delivered at the **Intercontinental Bahá'í Conference in Frankfurt, Germany**. Published by **Bahá'í Publishing Trust**. Available.

- **"Address to the Bahá'ís of Los Angeles, California"** (1954) – A speech emphasizing Bahá'í teachings and active participation. Available.

- **"Notes from a Talk about Visiting Haifa"** (date unknown) – Personal reflections on pilgrimage, obligatory prayers, and Bahá'í history. Available.

2. Audio and Visual Materials

- **"Remembering 'Milly': A Tribute to Amelia Collins"** – An **audio reading** of a tribute to Amelia Collins, available on **Bahá'í Blog**. Listen.

- **Bahá'í Media Archive** – A collection of **historical photographs** of Amelia Collins, including her interactions with Bahá'í figures. View.

- **"Milly: A Tribute to The Hand of the Cause of God Amelia E. Collins"** – A **biographical tribute** by **Abu'l-Qásim Faizí**, available.

3. Books About Amelia Collins

- **"Amelia Collins"** – Written by **Melanie Lotfali**, published by **Michelangelo** (2021). Available.

- **"Milly: A Tribute to The Hand of the Cause of God Amelia E. Collins"** – Written by **Abu'l-Qásim Faizí**, published by **George Ronald** (1977). Available.

APPENDIX 2: BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS H. COLLINS

Early Life and Career

Thomas H. Collins was a **mining engineer** who played a significant role in the **development of porphyry copper mining operations** in the United States. While details about his early life remain scarce, he was known for his **technical expertise and business acumen**, which led to his success in the **mining industry**.

Mining Achievements

- **Bisbee, Arizona** – Collins was instrumental in **developing porphyry copper mining operations** in Bisbee, which later became part of the **Phelps-Dodge Mining Company**.
- **Calumet, Michigan** – Before moving to Arizona, he worked in **Michigan's copper mining sector**, contributing to the **growth of industrial mining**.
- **Financial Success** – His mining ventures provided him with **substantial wealth**, which later enabled his wife, **Amelia Collins**, to make **significant philanthropic contributions** to Bahá'í institutions.

Personal Life and Connection to the Bahá'í Faith

- **Marriage to Amelia Collins** – Thomas married **Amelia Engelder Collins**, and they lived in **Michigan, Arizona, and California**.
- **Support for Bahá'í Initiatives** – Though he **never formally became a Bahá'í**, he **supported Amelia's Bahá'í activities**, including **financial contributions to Bahá'í schools and institutions**.
- **Pilgrimage to Haifa** – In **1923**, he accompanied Amelia on her **first pilgrimage to Haifa**, where Shogi Effendi **warmly received him**.
- **Unexpected Passing** – Thomas **died from a heart attack in 1937**, leaving behind a **legacy of industrial success and quiet support for Bahá'í initiatives**.

Thomas H. Collins played a **significant role** in the **development of porphyry copper mining operations** in **Bisbee, Arizona**, which later became part of the **Phelps-Dodge Mining Company**. His

mining ventures contributed to the **growth of industrial copper extraction**, but there are **no known mines or companies today that still carry his name directly**.

However, his **financial involvement** in early **Arizona mining operations**—including the **Calumet and Arizona Mine**—was instrumental in shaping **modern copper mining infrastructure**. Some historical records suggest that he was **connected to early mining investments** in **Bisbee and Jerome, Arizona**, including **Copper Queen, Bonanza Circle, and Junction Development**.

While his name may not be **directly associated** with existing mining operations, his **legacy in industrial mining** remains embedded in the **historical development of Arizona's copper industry**.